



FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

	Date	Number	
INSTRUCTION	November 22, 2000	1200.1	OS-SY

VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

1. **Purpose.** This instruction establishes policy and procedures regarding violent acts or threats of violence, or other inappropriate behavior that has the potential for causing harm to one's self or others in the performance of official duties.
2. **Applicability and Scope.** This instruction is applicable to all FEMA employees in headquarters, regions, field establishments, including disaster field offices and disaster fixed sites. The provisions of this instruction also apply to contractors and personnel from other agencies who are performing official duties in support of FEMA's mission.
3. **Supersession.** This instruction supersedes Temporary Directive Transmittal 99-01, Violence in the Workplace, dated August 30, 1999.
4. **References.**
 - a. Director's Memorandum, Violence in the Workplace, dated November 29, 1995.
 - b. FEMA Manual 3310.1, Disciplinary/Adverse Actions Procedures, dated September 16, 1981.
 - c. Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 2635, Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch.
 - d. Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 752, Adverse Actions.
5. **Policy.** It is the policy of FEMA to strive to minimize the likelihood of violence in the workplace through early intervention. Acts or threats of violence (explicit or implied) will not be tolerated. Employees found in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, and referral to appropriate law enforcement authorities. For other than FEMA employees, comparable appropriate action will be taken. Supervisors and managers should contact the Security Division of the

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Operations Support Directorate, Employee and Labor Relations Division of the Office of Human Resources Management, or Office of General Counsel for appropriate guidance.

6. **Definitions.**

a. **FEMA Facility.** FEMA facilities include any location occupied by FEMA where individuals are present for the purpose of performing official duties in support of FEMA's mission.

b. **Dangerous Weapon.** A device, instrument, material, or substance, animate or inanimate, that is used for, or is readily capable of, causing death or bodily injury.

c. **Violence.** An action which causes, is intended to cause, or is perceived as an intent to cause physical harm to persons or damage to property.

d. **Threat.** Any gesture, act, or oral or written expression which is perceived as an intent to cause physical harm to persons or damage to property.

e. **Crisis Management Plans.** A set of procedures designed to respond to a violent act or threats of violence. A copy of the plan must be given to each member of the Crisis Management Team.

f. **Crisis Management Team.** A group of individuals at each FEMA facility who are trained to respond to a violent act or threats of violence through activation of the Crisis Management Plans.

7. **Responsibilities.**

a. **Executive Associate Directors, Associate Directors, Administrators, Regional Directors, Office Directors, General Counsel, Inspector General, and Federal Coordinating Officers (or designee):**

(1) Will ensure that a Crisis Management Plan has been developed which meets local needs for each facility under their management control. The plans should be tested, implemented and approved by the Operations Support Directorate (OS). Guidance for developing the plan can be found in Attachment A.

(2) Will ensure that a Crisis Management Team has been appointed and trained at each facility under their organizational control. Teams will be staffed by full-time security personnel if assigned to the facility.

(3) Will ensure that all employees in their organization have attended mandatory training on the program.

(4) Must promote an environment which strives to minimize the likelihood of violence at work.

b. **Managers and Supervisors:**

(1) Must promote an environment which strives to minimize the likelihood of violence for employees under their supervision by:

(a) Demonstrating respect for all employees and holding them accountable for their behavior.

(b) Refusing to tolerate harmful, threatening, intimidating, harassing, disruptive, or other inappropriate behavior in the workplace.

(c) Monitoring, assessing, and responding to employee complaints, credible reports of threats, questionable behavior or prohibited conduct.

(d) Observing the warning signs of inappropriate or prohibited behavior and immediately reporting employee complaints and other questionable actions to the Security Division or the Employee and Labor Relations Division. In instances of imminent danger, immediately contact a member of the local Crisis Management Team or appropriate law enforcement authorities.

(e) Preserving the confidentiality of employee complaints by sharing information only with those who have a need to know in order to carry out official government business. Incident reports, related information, and the privacy of persons involved must be protected, just as in other sensitive and confidential personnel matters. The exception is when there is evidence of a direct threat or potential harm to self or others.

(2) Must attend violence in the workplace training and ensure that subordinate staff attend the training, as well. Managers and supervisors are encouraged to take advantage of other training opportunities to improve skills in areas such as human relations, interpersonal communications, conflict management, and defusing hostility.

(3) Will encourage employees to seek appropriate assistance through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

c. **Employees.** It is the responsibility of all employees, including other persons supporting FEMA's mission to:

(1) Respect all persons and government property, and refrain from behavior that could be perceived as threatening, harassing, intimidating, or dangerous to yourself or others.

(2) Report violent acts or threats of violence to your immediate supervisor, the Security Division or the Employee and Labor Relations Division. Information regarding a threat or

harmful act, where you reasonably believe that the circumstances may lead to a harmful act, should be reported immediately.

(3) Refrain from reporting false information or making unfounded complaints against others. Any individual who knowingly makes a false report or unfounded complaint will be subject to disciplinary action and may also result in referral to the Office of Inspector General for investigation and possible criminal prosecution.

(4) Attend violence in the workplace training. Training is mandatory for FEMA employees, and attendance is encouraged for other individuals employed at FEMA facilities.

(5) Cooperate and participate in efforts recommended to resolve workplace concerns.

d. **Crisis Management Team:**

(1) Will assist in the development of a local Crisis Management Plan to ensure that employees and supervisors at the facility will know who to contact and how to respond to conflicts, violent acts or threats of violence that arise in the workplace.

(2) Must immediately notify the Security Division or local law enforcement officials when a violent situation occurs.

(3) Must coordinate response to incidents with the Security Division.

(4) Must submit after-action reports of incidents, including recommendations for future actions, to the Security Division.

e. **Executive Associate Director, Operations Support Directorate (OS):**

(1) Will provide policy and oversight for the development of the FEMA Violence in the Workplace Program, including guidance for the development of Crisis Management Plans and approval of each local plan.

(2) Will provide oversight and assistance to Crisis Management Teams in each FEMA facility, including selection criteria for team members and training of members.

(3) Will provide advisory service and assistance to managers, supervisors, and employees on matters related to acts or threats of violence at any FEMA facility.

(4) Must ensure that appropriate investigations of acts or threats of violence are accomplished and the results forwarded to proper management officials. Also coordinate with the Offices of General Counsel, Inspector General, Human Resources Management, Equal Rights, Employee Assistance Program, Alternative Dispute Resolution Specialist, and others, as appropriate.

(5) Will assist the Preparedness, Training and Exercises Directorate in the development of the education and training component of the program.

(6) Will monitor and assess compliance with the program.

f. Director, Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM):

(1) Must provide advisory service and assistance to Crisis Management Teams in each FEMA facility, as warranted.

(2) Must provide advisory service and assistance to managers, supervisors, and employees regarding inappropriate behavior in the workplace. Inappropriate behavior includes fighting, threatening, intimidating, harassing, disruptive, or other harmful behavior.

(3) Must provide assistance to supervisors and managers regarding disciplinary and/or adverse actions for inappropriate behavior at work.

(4) Must coordinate with appropriate supervisors, security, and other staff regarding reported incidents or potential for incidents in the workplace.

(5) Must coordinate with the Office of General Counsel concerning disciplinary and/or adverse actions for inappropriate behavior.

(6) Will assist in the development of the education and training component of the program.

g. Associate Director, Preparedness, Training and Exercises Directorate (PT&E):

(1) Will assist in the development and delivery of training to employees, supervisors, managers, and Crisis Management Team members.

(2) Must ensure that appropriate resources are provided to support the education and training component of the FEMA Violence in the Workplace Program.

8. Supplementary Guidance. Attached to this instruction are the four documents for use in implementing and enforcing the Agency's Violence in the Workplace Program Policy:

- a. Guidelines for Developing a Crisis Management Plan;
- b. Preventing and Addressing Workplace Violence;
- c. Employee Relations Considerations; and

d. Employee Assistance Program Considerations.

All personnel are encouraged to review the documents and keep them available for future reference.

9. **Additional Assistance.** The critical element in preventing workplace violence is early intervention in situations which might lead to violence. All managers, supervisors, and employees should contact the Security Division or the Employee and Labor Relations Division if they witness or are informed of abusive or threatening behavior.

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James L. Witt
Director

Attachments

- A - Guidelines for Developing a Crisis Management Plan
- B - Preventing and Addressing Workplace Violence
- C - Employee Relations Considerations
- D - Employee Assistance Program Considerations